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PASS TO OES/STC, EILEEN KANE

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [ECON](#) [SENV](#) [TSPL](#) [TBIO](#) [EAGR](#) [ENRG](#) [AMGT](#) [APER](#) [AJ](#)

SUBJECT: EMBASSY SCIENCE FELLOWS PROGRAM 2009 - AZERBAIJAN

REF: STATE 10843

¶1. (U) Subject of proposal and general information:

- Topic: Coastal and Marine EcoSystem Management

- Relevant Ministries/Agencies: Ministry of Ecology, Ministry of Energy, State Oil Company of Azerbaijan (SOCAR), State Oil Fund of Azerbaijan (SOFAZ)

- Timeframe: 1-3 months, Spring-Summer 2010

- Medical Clearance necessary.

- Language Skills: Russian or Turkish/Azerbaijani is useful, but not mandatory.

- Security Clearance: Not needed.

¶2. (U) Proposal Description:

The Absheron Peninsula is one of the world's most polluted regions, scarred with remains of one hundred years or more of oil and gas extraction and chemical industrial sites. Severe damage to soil and water is the result, with air pollution also major concern. Inadequate waste/sewage disposal and treatment, industrial emissions and a culture of poor environmental planning, lack of funding and inefficiency in public administration have compounded the problem, which has spread to the Caspian Sea. Azerbaijan, with revenue from ongoing and expanding oil and gas extraction and export, is committed to clean up efforts, particularly in the Caspian Sea and along coastal areas. Implementation and effectiveness of environmental remediation efforts, however, are a major concern, and are proceeding at a slow pace. Groundwater and surface water must be tested and monitored, and databases should be developed to aid with public health and agricultural/fishing policies. Proper forms of waste disposal, including recycling programs, should be introduced, with adequate national standards on environmental protection and enforcement of environmental laws and regulations. Particular attention should be paid to management of marine life. Azerbaijan's authorities at the Ministry of Ecology, the State Oil Fund, and elsewhere, need to develop regional plans to reduce water and air pollution and decontaminate the soil, especially along river systems that carry water to the Caspian Sea. They should receive appropriate training to assist in development of environmental regulations and compliance and management of marine and aquatic areas. A Science Fellow, perhaps from the National Science Foundation, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration or Environmental Protection Agency, could greatly assist in these efforts.

¶3. (U) Administrative Support:

The Embassy will do its best to provide housing but cannot yet guarantee housing. The Embassy will provide office support as necessary through the Political-Economic section. In-country travel would be available as long as adequate Embassy funds exist to support it at that time. Embassy cannot support international travel or attendance at conferences outside Azerbaijan.

¶4. (U) RSO Clearance:

Embassy Baku RSO does not object to the appointment of an Embassy

Science Fellow to Baku, Azerbaijan during the spring-summer 2010 timeframe.

¶5. (U) Contact Information:

The State Department point of contact will be EST Officer Selim Ariturk in the Political-Economic section. His phone number is (994)(12) 498-0335, ext. 4122; fax (994)(12)465-6671. Back-up Office would be Economic Officer Shannon Runyon.

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